

Making Improvement

The team documented all the project opportunities and set up action plans across the whole business involving staff to address all the learnings as documented above. Each individual department have set up action groups to monitor the progress and KPI's have been developed to link activity to the strategic direction of the business. The on-going improvement plan is:

- Giving customers more realistic expectations
- Customers are being managed better reducing resource drain in the whole supply chain
- Non-value add processing is reducing
- Resource time is being freed up to use on proactive development of the business

The Ranger diaries have been developed with Poka Yoke's put in place to prevent logistical booking errors which were impacting on Ranger productivity.

Business Benefits

Zoolab has embraced the BIA programme as a driver for cultural change with the whole business seeing positive impacts on their working day. People are ready and willing to try out new ways of working. In addition there are many tangible benefits which include:

- The business is on track to increase turnover by 11% within the next financial year and forward sales are continually increasing.
- Overdue debt has reduced by 100k and this is continuing to fall.
- The company has come out of a cycle of borrowing to cover seasonality – investment from within. This is a significant milestone for the business.
- There is a process for new product development

- The business infrastructure is now in a cycle of constant re-investment
- There is planned investment in staff training
- The Company is now set up to Rebrand
- There is a proactive focus on animal and staff welfare

“This project is very exciting for us, looking at the journey of the customer from point of enquiry to point of rebooking, with the aim of streamlining all processes and procedures to become as efficient as possible. It has been brilliant to have our staff involved in the lean academy this year, as it has given us the opportunity to provide relevant development with subject experts whilst helping to keep them focussed on the project at hand. We have been placing our staff on lean management courses for 5 years now, and it has transformed our workforce. We very much have a lean culture and it's something that we plan to continue for the foreseeable future. “

- **Nicola Stephenson, Operations Director**

Created in 1996, Zoolab has become the UK's number one animal handling experience company, working in the education and care sector, as well as recently branching out into the corporate and events sector. With a national network of rangers and an 'animal team' on hand, Zoolab helps schools, nurseries, care homes, corporate organisations and such to bring people closer to nature, stimulating an interest in science whilst helping to deliver their key messages and/ or learning goals.



ZOOLAB
Amaze Educate Inspire

Business Improvement Academy Project

Zoolab has had a good number of staff participating in the Academy programme over the last few years and this project concentrated on the "Customer Journey". The delegates involved represented Sales and Marketing and Administration functions within the business.

Project Analysis

The team decided to map out the full customer experience from initial contact, from many touch points, right through to completion of events and collection of fees. The mapping activity involved the majority of staff based at the Larbert site but also included the rangers who deliver the events all across the UK. The investment in setting up these sessions demonstrated the commitment of the management team to involve all staff who have some role in the "customer journey". The staff played a major role in developing the process map into a full Value Stream Map (VSM) that was visually displayed in the main office. Data, ideas, issues, capacities etc. were added to the VSM and this led to a whole series of action plans being generated across the business.

Significantly the enthusiasm of the Rangers to play a role in this had a major impact on developing a "lean culture" with people coming out of their silos and sharing experiences, good and bad, with a view to improvement. From the VSM the team documented key learnings that could be developed in to improvement plans.

Learning from the customer perspective:

- Perhaps we give potential customers unrealistic expectations?
- Listing animals on the website – makes them believe they can choose
- Terms and conditions and cancellation policy not clearly detailed
- How do we describe the product? Is this consistent with sales pitch?
- Do we need to let customers know what is expected of them?

Learning from the Ranger Diaries:

- Too much incorrect information at the front end

- Contact info, dates, times, cost, etc. – needs to be more transparent
- Often visits are scheduled without sufficient thought for logistics
- Visits scheduled over 60 miles away for presenter impacts on productivity

Learning from the customer confirmation process:

- Incorrect email addresses
- We don't know if they have received emails
- How are we telling the customer to prepare for the visit?

Learning from the Final Reminders process

- It's too official for the customers liking – bold red lettering!
- There are no clear standard guidelines for the customer as to how to get the best from the Zoolab Experience

Learning from the Invoicing process

- Is the invoice going to the right person?
- We have 10% overdue constantly - £170K
- This takes up a massive resource to chase down